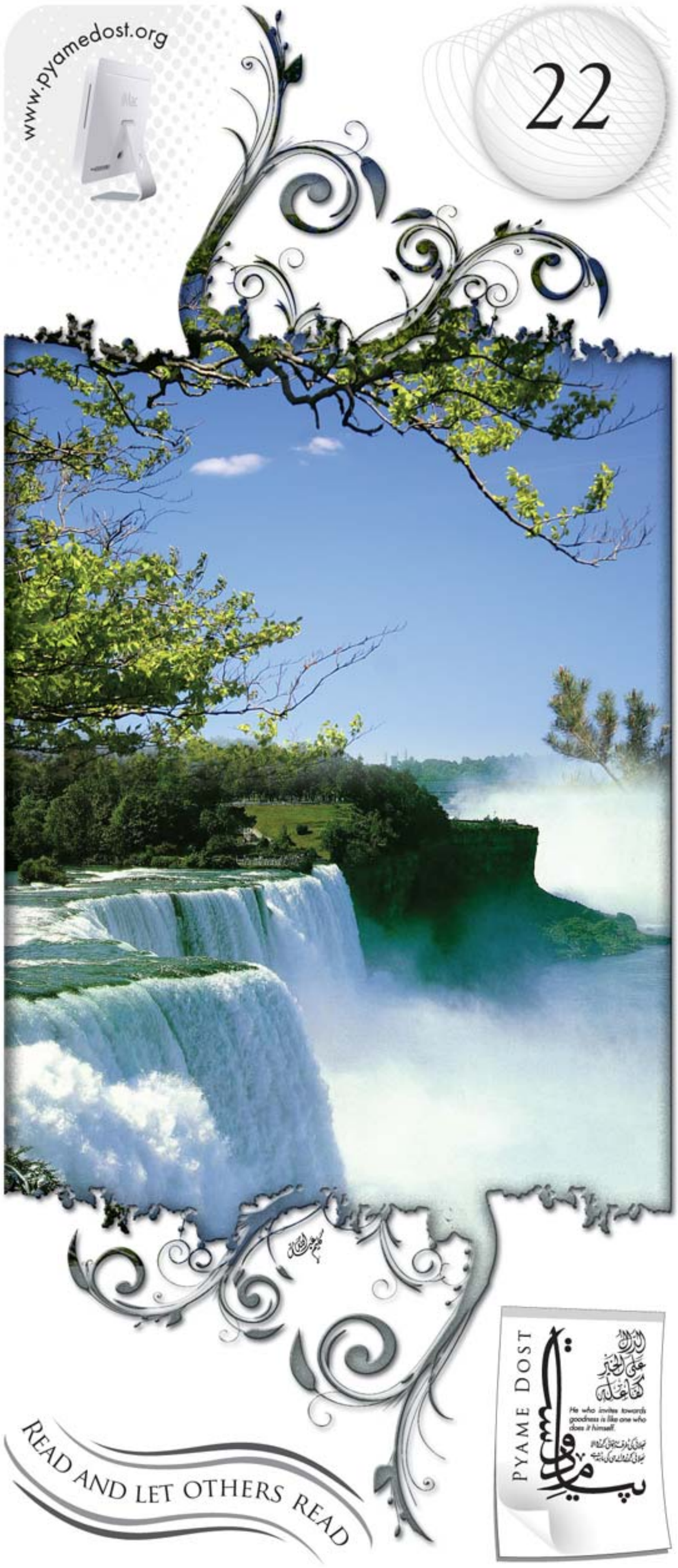


# Love for Allah

## In the Light of Quran & Sunnah



In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

It is very difficult to live in this world as an obedient servant of Allah in the true sense of the word. What makes it so difficult is the fact that Allah has bestowed upon a person the freewill to choose between the right and wrong way. A person has been given the choice of acknowledging his Creator and submitting to His wishes or of rejecting Him and bowing down to the lowliest of things. He can opt to either adopt an attitude of goodness and piety or be arrogant, disobedient and rebellious. Along with being given the will to choose the path of evil, Satan, his eternal enemy, is a person's constant companion always making evil deeds appear attractive and attempting to entice him with them. These two things combined, make it all the more difficult for a person to resist the temptation to wrongdoing and to protect his Eeman (faith) and religious values from the onslaught of Satan, the enemy that is circulating in his body like his blood. The journey is a tough one and the path is fraught with difficulties.

The other thing that needs to be clearly understood is that while Allah has placed difficulties in following the path of goodness, to facilitate this journey, the Lord of the worlds has also created the means to overcome them. The emotion and ability to love, placed in every human heart, is one such means which makes it easier to bear the difficulties in life. In all of the toughest stages in the journey of life, this emotion has been heightened so that it overcomes the hardships faced. For example, every mother knows just how difficult it is to give birth and raise a child and only she knows how she meets all the emotional and physical demands of being a mother. Yet, where she is required to perform such a challenging task, she has also been endowed with the maternal instinct which is such an intensely powerful emotion that she is willing to make all kinds of sacrifices and do whatever it takes to surmount the difficulties of motherhood.

Similarly the difficult task of being steadfast and constant in obeying Allah can only become easy if the love for Allah takes root in a person's heart to such an extent that all other emotions become secondary to it. Only then will a person have the good fortune of having this worldly life itself become like Paradise for him. This, of course, does not mean that such intense love for Allah and the feeling of always being close to Him will result in the fading away of the difficulties in life, but simply, that they will not bother a person to such an extent as to cause him anguish. Many of the things that agonise normal people will become trivial and inconsequential to those who love Allah deeply.

Grief, sickness or the passing away of a loved one are all tragedies that affect even those who love Allah intensely. But these events do not make them reach a state of such agitation that they lose all self-control, become despondent or start complaining to the Lord of the worlds. When the Prophet's (SAW) son Ibrahim was breathing his last, the Prophet's eyes started to shed tears, and he said:

*"The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim! Indeed we are grieved by your separation."* **(Bukhari)**

So a deep and intense love for Allah is like a sincere and sympathetic companion, constantly with a person, consoling him in every grief and anxiety, supporting him in every trying time in his life and without whom it would not be easy to traverse the difficult paths of life. It is this intense love for Allah which is the most powerful of all emotions. It is also the fountainhead of love for the Prophet (SAW) and of Deen (religion). The Prophet (SAW) is so beloved to us because he is the prophet of Allah and our religion is so dear to us because it has been prescribed to us by Allah.

### Reasons for Loving Someone

Let us now look at all the possible reasons due to which someone is loved. All these qualities are not only present in Allah, but are present collectively and in a perfect and complete form.

### Love of Self

It is an undeniable fact that every person loves himself. He wants protection for and wellbeing in his health, wealth and offspring because in his mind they are connected to his wellbeing. He feels that through them his name and fame will be preserved; the more his family members and wealth, the more his prestige and status. It is therefore quite obvious that the root cause of his love for them is his love for self.

True knowledge takes a person away from love of self towards love of the Creator to whom he owes his existence. The person who knows himself well realises that his existence is not due to his own abilities and expertise but has been bestowed by someone else who created him, gave him life and elevated his status. It is this Creator and Bestower who has endowed a person with the internal qualities and the external means to make him realize his full potential. Allah reminds us in the Quran:

*"But does not man call to mind that We created him before out of nothing."* **(19:67)**

When a person realizes that he owes his existence to the Living, Self-subsisting and Eternal One who is not dependent on anyone for His survival and maintains and provides for all His creation then he definitely finds himself loving the Benevolent and Generous One who has created and maintains him. Can it be possible that a person takes shelter from the sun under the shade of a tree and is grateful to the shade and dislikes the tree which is the cause of the shade? When a person realizes that the continuity of his existence, the maintenance of all his abilities and the provision of all his needs is due to the benevolence of Allah, then how is it possible that he should not feel an intense love for Allah? The more familiar he is with Allah and the greater the realisation of Allah's munificence and generosity, the more his love for Allah will intensify. To keep feeling this way, it is necessary for a person to devote some time on a daily basis to remind himself of the blessings of Allah bestowed upon him, both within him and outside.

Sometimes when reflecting on these blessings, a person should also try to visualize what his life would be like without just one of these blessings. If he had been deprived of the blessing of sight and hearing or was unable to move his arms, those very hands with which he can be so violent, or his legs, what would his fate have been? Then, above all, he should try to imagine what it would have been like to be mentally impaired and not be able to use the brain whose achievements he is so proud of.

Just imagine the plight of the blind and to not know where you are treading; whether it is into a dangerous hole or onto a venomous creature. The colours of things would have had no meaning, nor would you have enjoyed the beauty of nature around you. Just try closing your eyes for a few minutes and see how dark and meaningless your life feels. Remind yourself that you are experiencing this frightening darkness for only a few minutes whereas a blind person is doomed to this fate his entire life. If you want to feel the plight of the dumb, stop yourself from speaking for just one day and use only gestures to express yourself. Try to imagine how a person who has no hands would board a bus, how he eats, gets dressed or saves himself when he stumbles. Then go on to remind yourself that you have no rights on Allah nor have you repaid Him adequately for the blessings bestowed upon you (not that we can ever do that no matter how hard we try). Remind yourself also that whenever Allah wants, He can snatch away every blessing of His and no one can even dare to call Him to account for His decisions.

Additionally, remind yourself that for His obedient servants, Allah has





created a world of eternal bounties and He wants that through obedience to Him and submitting to His commands, a person should attain perpetual bliss. To enable a person to achieve this state of felicity, Allah has sent a long line of prophets and also preserved His Last Book (Quran) revealed to us through the last of His prophets in the chain, along with preserving the Prophet's (SAW) sunnah (way of life) for us forever. This is the biggest favour of Allah upon humanity.

### Benevolence

The realisation of His benevolence is one of the most powerful reasons for having an intense and deep love for Allah. If a person bestows wealth upon another, fulfills all his needs, helps and supports him, protects him from the plots of his enemies, provides him with the means to achieve his goals, keeps his relatives and dear ones happy with him, then such a person will truly become very dear to a person. He will start loving and revering his benefactor intensely. This is a person's instinctive response to such benevolence and generosity and even the most savage person feels indebted to his benefactor.

If a person were to reflect on all this, it will become obvious that the real benefactor is none but Allah. In other words, if someone gives you a lot of wealth he is not the real benefactor, but merely an intermediary. The real benefactor is Allah because He is the one who bestowed the wealth on the giver and He is the one who inspired the giver to pass it on. If Allah had not bestowed this wealth, it would not be available to the giver, nor would the giver have felt partial to one specific person out of so many others in need. So gratitude and indebtedness should really be felt for the one who bestows and provides the inspiration to the giver to pass on his gifts and hence recognition becomes due to the real benefactor who has provided the means of giving. That real benefactor is Allah and His benevolence and generosity is for the benefit of His creation; He does not need any benefit or profit what so ever, for He is independent of all wants. All the obvious and non-apparent blessings we possess are bestowed upon us by Him. Allah tells us in the Quran:

*""And He gives you of all that you ask for. But if you count the favors of Allah, never will you be able to number them: verily man is given up to injustice and ingratitude."* **(14:34)**

The innumerable blessings bestowed upon us by the Beloved should cause our hearts and minds to be flooded with the realization and gratitude for His favours and the tongue should be expressing this constantly. By just reflecting on the enormity of the debt owed to Him, a person's heart will become full of love for Him.

### Perfection

A person instinctively loves perfection. For example if people hear that a certain ruler is not only very just, but is a protector of the poor and generous to them, along with being God-conscious, even if he is not accessible to them, love and respect for him will involuntarily find its way into the hearts of the people who hear about his qualities.

If you reflect on it, this is yet another reason why Allah deserves to be loved by us. It is due to His lordship that this universe is functioning so effectively. He brought all His creation into being, gave them a beautiful form, bestowed on them all kinds of blessings and provided them with the means of comfort and luxuries. Who can be a better bestower, fulfiller of needs and more generous and kinder than Him? To not love the One who is not only the Most Benevolent, but is the creator of benevolence, the benevolent and the means of benevolence, is clear proof of one's ignorance. It is sheer folly to fail to acknowledge the One whose munificence knows no bounds and whose benevolence is so limitless that

everything in the heavens and the earth is surviving due to His generosity.

**Beauty and Splendour**

It is natural to love and appreciate beauty. Perfection in beauty means the maximum possible level to which a thing is capable of being beautiful. For example when one says that a horse is magnificent, one means that all the superlative qualities possible in a horse are to be found in it i.e. appearance, colour, gait, speed etc. Allah is the Creator and Bestower of this beauty and the beauty in the entire universe and all His creation is only a small part from His treasures of beauty. Just imagine, then, how beautiful the Creator of such a beautiful universe must be!

This beauty and splendour is also to be found in things that can only be felt but not seen. For example, everyone may say that, "so-and-so has such a beautiful character and is intelligent, wise, honest, generous, God conscious and loyal." Though all these qualities cannot be seen through the physical faculties but only perceived and experienced, yet, the people who posses them are the most cherished and revered by us. We feel love for God-conscious and pious people although we may not even have met them but only heard of them. They are dear to us because of the beauty of their inner qualities, their knowledge and taqwa (God-consciousness) which does not have an apparent form that can be seen. By reflecting on this, we will realize that we love the prophets and the pious people based on these three attributes-knowledge, power and purity. It is very obvious that all these qualities are present to a level of perfection and collectively only in Allah and not in anyone else. Hence on the basis of this, only Allah is deserving of our highest level of love.

If we look at the attribute of knowledge, we find that all the fields of knowledge, collectively, are not equal to even an iota of Allah's knowledge from whom nothing in the heavens and the earth is hidden. If all the most intelligent people in the world were to get together to try to discover the way to create an ant or a mosquito they will not be able to get to attain even one percent of this knowledge. Whatever knowledge they possess has been taught to them by Allah who tells us in the Quran:

*"And if all the trees on earth were pens and the Ocean (were ink) with seven Oceans behind it to add to its (supply) yet would not the Words of Allah be exhausted (in the writing): for Allah is Exalted in power, full of Wisdom."* **(31:27)**

If knowledge is the reason for the recognition and love given to the scholar, none other than Allah can be the most beloved.

Now let us look at the attribute of power. For just a minute, visualize the complete power, might, majesty and ability of the One who has the entire universe in His control. He is the Creator and Owner of the heavens, the earth, the sun, moon and stars, the tall mountains that reach up to the sky, the storms, the seas, the beasts and humans. Everyone's forelock is within His grasp. If he chooses to destroy all of them, it will not reduce His kingdom by even an iota and He would not tire in the least in creating millions more like it. No one has power other than Him. He is The Compellor, The Dominant, The Knowledgeable and The Powerful. Greatness and Glory, Wrath and Power only befit Him. If one is loved because of complete and absolute power, who can be more worthy of this love than Allah?

Now look at the quality of purity which means to be free of any blemish or fault. We love the prophets and righteous people because of their relative freedom from the failings and faults most people have. But no one is totally free from faults, failings and imperfections except The Sovereign Lord, The Holy, The Owner of Majesty and Bounty, because to be a created being is to be dependent, helpless, and flawed. So it is obvious that the quality of





perfection is exclusive to Allah alone who is Perfection itself. If there is any excellence present in creation, it is His bestowal.

These are the reasons due to which we love someone. If all the desired qualities are present in one person, the love for him reaches its peak. For example, if a person's son is handsome, has a good character, is well-mannered, knowledgeable, wise, good to people, obedient and service oriented, then naturally his father will love him dearly. The stronger the aforementioned qualities, the deeper the love will be.

If we think about it, the most excellent qualities in their perfect and comprehensive form are collectively present in Allah alone and He is the only One truly deserving of the highest level of our love. He has no associate in His Lordship and Sovereignty and hence, there can be no associate with Him when it comes to being loved. This right to be loved so dearly, above all others, belongs only to Allah because:

- He is our Creator and Owner and it is because of His benevolence and Lordship that we are alive.
- We are constantly being favoured by Him from behind the veil of cause and effects..
- He is the one who is benevolent to all His creation and showers His gifts and bounties on everyone and everything. He favoured them with existence and then He endowed them with all kinds of blessings.

**Why this Forgetfulness & Ingratitude to Allah?**

We have been given eyes only to see the manifestations of His splendor and hearts so that we may love Him alone. We have been given tears so that we may shed it in His remembrance and our foreheads have been elevated so that we can prostrate them to Him alone. But alas! Our tongues have become deprived of the precious treasures of His praise and our hearts have become barren in the absence of a deep love for Allah. Instead of love for Him, our souls are saturated with love for others. We drag our feet when moving towards Him, and there is not a single tear left to shed in His love and remembrance. What disservice has He done to us that we have abandoned Him? What great blessings have we attained by leaving him? Who loves us more than Allah? We knock on the door of strangers for this love, only to be rejected again and again, and yet we do not race towards Him that He may love us.

**The First Step in the Plan of Action**

The first step in the journey to Him is repentance. Come, let us with all our resolve and strength, bow down before Allah and stop disobeying and rebelling against Him. Let us be passionate in our love for Him and kneel down and prostrate to Him and beg and cry out to him so that we may again endear ourselves to Him. If we are sincere, He will, like before, embrace us and bring us so close to Him that we may once again become recipients of His immense love and be showered by His limitless blessings and rewards.

**Obedience to Allah**

Through His innumerable ways Allah is calling out to us to open our heedless eyes. Ask yourself if any nation has survived after disobeying their Lord or if any group of people have been able to escape from being called to account by their Lord. Can anyone despite having led a life of heedlessness and turning away from Allah be considered truly successful? If this is not so, then how can we hope to be alive after having consumed poison? How can we expect to reach Paradise while treading the paths that lead to Hell? We want to lead the life that Pharaoh led and achieve the results attained by Moses. To become worthy of getting to know Allah and deserving of His love, we will have to strive hard with all our might and make a lot of sacrifices along the way.

### The Ten Ways to Develop a Deep Love for Allah

1. Recite the Quran in such a way that you understand and reflect on its meanings and the demands it makes on you.

2. Perform voluntary acts of worship along with the obligatory ones as a way of gaining closeness to Allah. This will gradually take you from the stage of loving Allah to making Him your beloved.

3. Be diligent in doing Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) in every situation. This remembrance should be done at all times through the tongue, heart and actions. The more active you are, the more the love for Allah will become a part of your being.

4. Refrain from following the desires of the self when they become most inviting and adopt the way that pleases Allah. No matter how challenging this path is, you should not give up or lose hope.

5. Keep the heart constantly busy in contemplating Allah's names and attributes, consciously observing their manifestation in life and getting to know Him more and more. The person who is busy familiarising himself with Allah through His names and attributes and in recognising Him through His handiwork will necessarily get to love Him immensely.

6. Keep in mind the favours of Allah and His gifts, the manifestations of His glory and greatness and His blessings both hidden and obvious. This is especially effective in engendering a deep and lasting love for Him.

7. Most importantly, be in a constant state of utter humility to Him.

8. Talk to Allah, recite His Book, do long qiyaam (standing in prayer) and repent and seek His forgiveness at the time when Allah descends to the lowest heaven(the last third of the night).

9. Be present in the assemblies of Allah's true friends to reap the fruits of their good words and their wisdom. Learn to observe silence and be wise enough to speak only when it is clear that whatever is being said is useful to both yourself and others.

10. Stay away from all those things that distance your heart from Allah. Only people who can adopt these ways can traverse the difficult paths of love that lead to the door of the beloved.

### The Demands of Love for Allah

Allah tells us in the Quran:

*"Say(O Prophet): "If you do love Allah follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins for Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful." Say: "Obey Allah and His Apostle"; but if they turn back Allah loves not those who reject Faith."* **(3:31-32)**

The true essence of Eeman (faith) is love for Allah and the first condition of this love is that no other love can coexist in the heart with this love if it conflicts with it. Secondly, the only way to love Allah to the highest level is to follow the path followed by the Prophet (SAW) as all other paths are misguidance. Thirdly, the way to become beloved to Allah is also by following the way of the Prophet (SAW). If a person does not follow the Sunnah (way) of the Prophet (SAW), yet is under the illusion that he is beloved to Allah or if others think that he is loved by Allah immensely, then this is a wrong assumption. Fourthly, obedience to Allah and the Prophet (SAW) is the minimum requirement of our Deen (religion) and if a person turns away from doing this, then he is considered amongst those that disbelieve in our religion. Allah does not love such as these.

To fulfill the demands of Eeman, it is not enough for a person to worship and obey Allah, but that obedience to Him should be done with conviction and with sincere and true love for Him. The standard of love that has been set is that it should be more than the love of any other worldly thing. In the Quran Allah tells us:





*"Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates or your kindred; the wealth that you have gained; the commerce in which you fear a decline; or the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah or His apostle or the striving in His cause; then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious."* **( 9:24)**

*"Yet there are men who take (for worship) others besides Allah as equal (with Allah); they love them as they should love Allah. But those of faith are overflowing in their love for Allah."* **(2:165)**

To love something or someone more than Allah and His Prophet (SAW) means that when something totally conflicting comes up and a person, ignoring the demands of Allah and His Prophet (SAW), gives it preference, then it means that thing is more beloved to him than Allah and His Prophet (SAW). If on the other hand he gives preference to Allah and the Prophet's (SAW) obedience, then it means that love for them is his top priority in life. The love for Allah and His Prophet (SAW) is a necessary part of Eeman and without it a person's claim to belief cannot be considered genuine. This is the standard set for judging one's true love for Allah and in the light of which a person can assess his Eeman and love for Allah in his day to day life. This means that love for others should be subordinated to love for Allah; it should not be equal to or more than it.

### LASTLY

Nearness or distance to Allah depends on a person's state of heart. If a person is heedless of Allah and careless in obeying Him, then there is no one further away from Him. But if he is attentive to Allah, conscious of Him at all times, remembers Him constantly, is grateful to Him for all His blessings, is patient at times of adversities and trials, and pleads to Him for steadfastness, there is nothing closer to Him than Allah.

Allah is closer to a person than his jugular vein. When a person calls his Lord, his Lord answers the call. "Answering" him means the acceptance of his call. If a person asks Allah for something which he should ask Him for and in the way that he should ask Him, then Allah surely gives it to Him. If a person does not get what he is asking for in that form, then Allah gives it to him in a better form or it is saved up for him.

Additionally when a person truly loves Allah, then his Lord loves him too. Fortunate is the person who has true, sincere and intense love for Allah and his Lord is well-pleased with him. Every moment of such a person's life is spent in obedience and submission to Allah and he willingly accepts whatever his Lord decides for him, so that at the time of his death he is given the good news:

*"O (you) soul in (complete) rest and satisfaction! "Come back to your Lord well pleased (yourself) and well-pleasing unto Him! "Enter you then among my Devotees!"Yes, enter you my Heaven"!* **(89:27-30)**

May Allah include us amongst these fortunate souls. Aameen!

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیۡۤ اَسۡئَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنۡ یُّحِبُّكَ وَالۡعَمَلَ الَّذِیۡ یُبَلِّغُنِیۡ حُبَّكَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجۡعَلۡ حُبَّكَ اَحَبَّ اِلَیَّ مِنۡ نَّفۡسِیۡ وَمَالِیۡ وَاَهۡلِیۡ وَمِنَ الۡمَآءِ الۡبَارِدِ۔

*"O Allah, I beg of You Your love and the love of those who love You, and such conduct as should lead me to Your love. O Allah, make Your love dearer to me than myself, my property, my family and dearer than cold water."* **(Tirmidhi)**
Aameen!

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